

Minutes, Bucksport Economic Development Committee – May 10, 2016

Attending: David Kee, Paul Rabs, Andy Lacher, Linda Plourde, Mark Eastman, Larry Wahl, John Paul LaLonde, Ron Russell, Rich Rotella and Jeff Hammond.

David Kee called the meeting to order at 5:01pm. April minutes were reviewed and it was noted that there were 2 updates in the minutes regarding Heritage Park Sign Update. Rich will remove the second update as it was from March minutes and not for the April minutes. The minutes were accepted by Larry Wahl and seconded by Ron Russell.

Code Enforcement Officer: Jeff Hammond has some business permitting updates. He has issued permits to Caleb Carter and Colleen Gross both of whom are occupying space in the Heywood House. Caleb has a software development business and Colleen Gross and her husband are operating a wine shop and small café with an outdoor seating area. Caleb was already in business in Bucksport in Kim Delbridge's building and moved to Larry's building. The wine business is scheduled to open in the middle of June. Star Larrabee has opened her used clothing store and boutique which has also been permitted. Timothy Woodward has established a home based business doing tree cutting (arbor services). Everett Pierce has relocated his gunsmith business from Route 46 to his home on River Road. Charles Downes (Chuck) has moved Monument Business from Heritage Park to former site of Industrial Packing on the River Road. All of these have been permitted. The Town Council met on April 28, 2016, and approved new flood plain ordinance and digital maps that we have. This change is not effective until July 20, 2016 to be consistent with FEMA's effective date. They have also approved an amendment to chapter 5, which allows demolition to take place on Saturdays from 7-7. AIM demolition is moving right along as they have made progress on the river and also on River Road side which they demolished a rather large building which is visible from River Road. Comp plan committee met on May 9, 2016, and they are working on the vision statement and goals and objectives. There is still work that needs to be done on the vision statement and they have just started on goals and objectives. This will progress as meetings take place over the next several months. The planning board met last week to take up discussion about Shoreland Zoning standards in the Downtown Shoreland District to see if anything could be done to lessen the dimensional standards which have been a problem for some business owners to add more types of uses to their buildings. Jeff found in his research compared to what DEP has in their guidelines that all of our standards are less restrictive now. Jeff recommended we pursue the same exception for residential uses as we have for commercial uses which gives the owner more flexibility with their property. We use lot area and shore frontage to the building itself for commercial purposes. He states we have to convince the DEP that it is justified to have that exception to apartments as well in the downtown Shoreland district. Jeff is still working with waterfront signs for picnic point. He has having difficulty with his graphic artist to make some changes due to personal issues which require her full attention right now. He was hoping to have something from her by last week and he sent her an email earlier today to ask where we stood with them. He is also waiting on tribal content from the tribal historian of Penobscot Nation who has ensured Jeff that he will give us something to put on one of the signs. The board of appeals is meeting tonight at 7pm for 2 variances (1) to allow 2 mobile parks on a lot which is only large enough to support 1 dwelling in the rural zone (2) the Lighthouse Art Center, due to recent changes that the owner brought forward they are allowed to do what they want to do without a variance, what they are proposing to do is to convey portion of the lot to the Town (the driveway to the marina). By doing this they have removed a tremendous portion of impervious surface from their lot, so that plus other minor changes (using pervious materials for the walkway and have eliminated steps and replaced with green space) it will reduce lot coverage to 80% so they have withdrawn their application based on Jeff's recommendation.

Heart and Soul Update: Rich said that the Open House was held on April 2nd, several meetings were held during the month, a welcoming for Sue Lessard was held on April 26th, and Phase II training was held on April 30th. On May 9th, Bucksport Heart & Soul in collaboration with Main St. Bucksport hosted a clear pathways program led by Jane LaFleur. We had 14 participants who walked along Main St to the Alamo, up Elm St, across Federal St, down Central St and down to the gazebo on the waterfront and we heard stories about what they remember about certain stops along the way. The next Heart & Soul meeting is Wednesday, May 11, 2016 from 6-8pm at the H&S HQ.

Heritage Park Sign Update: Rich met with Kim Delbridge at Heritage Park and he gave some recommendations. He recommended using 1/2" board as businesses on the 1/4" board need to be changed. He can replace some of the branding on the boards that he can reach rather than taking them off the posts and bringing them to him. He said to move boards closer together as there is a lot of wasted space between the boards and we will be able to hold up to 24 businesses compared to the 12 we currently have room for now. He suggested having the highway crew, or local business sandblast and repaint the posts before doing any other work to the signs. Kim took measurements and photos of the existing Heritage Park sign (still located in Rich's garage) and said that it could be rebuilt for far less money than the original sign. It was his opinion that the current sign was in too much disrepair to fix it and it would be better to start new. He didn't recommend going with an electronic sign. He will get quotes as soon as possible. Other thoughts were to get electricity to light the sign up and to plant flowers around the base of the concrete.

Wednesday On Main: David Kee advised the group to look at the last 2 pages in the packet in which the 2nd page includes the program line-up for the coming year. He suggested the Economic Development Committee, Town Employees and Town Council attend the events in a show of support. He explained that there is an advertisement going to be in the Down East Magazine this spring. He said that Paula Kee will also reach out through social media. Paul Rabs recommended handing out packets to the cruise ship passengers as he, his wife, David Kee and Paula Kee did last year.

Waldo-Hancock Bridge Memorabilia Update: Rich and Larry went to Frank's barbershop to check on the fixture he had. Larry and Rich agreed the piece was too small to create a monument for it. Rich has left several messages with the DOT in regards to what remains in Orland but hasn't been successful in reaching them.

Water Trough Update: Rich spoke to the President of the Garden Club who said the plants were already purchased and would like to keep them in the trough. Rich told her he would bring it to the Economic Development Committee but it was possible to keep the plants there for this year. Larry Wahl said he would rather see the Trough running this year.

Marina/Town Dock Update: Rich states the marina is at capacity for the upcoming season. The crew at the marina states we need more power to the Town Dock to accommodate requests as we are currently maxed out with 4 boats at 30 amps. The guys would like to see 2 more pedestals brought in so we could add 50 amp outlets. Bill Chandler said the cruise ships are making roughly 8 trips per year and unless we expand the marina within the next 3 years we won't have any room for them. They have created a value added program for their patrons by utilizing the school van, they shuttle there patrons to Hannaford, True Value, Car Quest or Hamlin Marine at no charge. They hosted a band on the waterfront last summer and would like to do that again this summer in conjunction with Guns & Hoses. The staff is looking to work with Melissa Terry and her tour boat which is currently out of Stockton Springs. June 2, 2016 @ 5pm will be a waterfront meeting for discussion about the marina/harbor.

Broadband Update: Rich attended the Maine Municipal Broadband Conference in Augusta on May 5, 2016 and met with Time Warner Cable, FairPoint Communications, Red Zone Wireless and Pioneer Broadband. Rich provided the committee with a 9 page hand out that FairPoint shared with him. Don states Time Warner is expanding its coverage on Verona Island over 4 miles to reach 70 customers. Time Warner is getting 57% of the cost of doing that from the Connect Me Fund.

New Business: Rich shared the ad from Downeast Magazine for the committee. Rich mentioned we were in the Working Waterfront section of the past week's Bangor Daily News. Penobscot Marine Museum hosting event at the Alamo on May 12, 2016 @ 6pm with old footage of the Town and the photos that currently reside at the Heart & Soul Building. Paul Rabbs asked about having a small, electronic sign at Heritage Park to say "Heritage Park" and eliminate all the individual business signs as well as the need for a new larger Buckstown Heritage Park sign. Paul also said that MMA safety & offshore institute that the press release has been postponed for a little while but Dr. Brenner still wanted to come to the Town Council to present what his proposed business plan is. Also, we need to look at zoning for Maine Maritime Academy to make sure it is in order so they don't have to wait several months. He would also like to see priority given to the communications back bone to make the industrial park an industrial/technology park. Linda Plourde wanted to know more about optimism of MMA where she has been away from Bucksport. Councilor Kee was optimistic and heard that President Brenner didn't expect as much publicity when he made the announcement at the Bangor Rotary Meeting. Don Houghton states that one of the things is that they need to raise \$25 million as it is coming up on their anniversary and they are making the pitch for all kinds of corporate people and alumni. This is plan to get monies from different places then they are normally getting money from. The talk is 50 students per week for 50 weeks and they are making over \$100k/year. John Paul asked if the Town, Town Council, or the Economic Development Committee has sent a letter of support to Maine Maritime Academy. Councilor Kee said not yet but that he has a meeting with the mayor in regards to MMA tomorrow. Don recommended a meeting be held down in Castine to talk about general stuff even if they won't go into specifics.

Adjournment: Ron Russell made the motion at 6:02pm and it was seconded by Linda Plourde.

Submitted by Rich Rotella

Next BEDC Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, June 14th @ 5:00 pm
Heart & Soul Headquarters at 72 Main St.